

51 Horrifying Writing Prompts

1. You wake up on Halloween morning to a nasty surprise—an early snow has dumped 2 inches of the white stuff. Even nastier? There is a set of footprints leading up your driveway and into your house. You live alone.
2. Your wife wakes you up in the middle of the night to feed your baby, who is screaming in the next room. You start to get up but then remember that you don't have any children.
3. Your grandmother dies and leaves you a treasure trove of family photos. While flipping through the albums one night, you come across a picture of her when she was about your age, standing in front of an old car with a group of her friends. Your girlfriend is one of them.
4. You're taking your son and his friends trick-or-treating in the next town. You and the four costumed boys pile into your car and head out. Halfway there, you look in the rearview mirror and find that you now have five passengers.
5. You wake up from a nap and reach for your cell phone to find that you've been tagged in a Facebook photo. It's a picture of you while were asleep in your living room chair a few minutes ago, and you live alone.
6. You wake up on Saturday morning to find you're alone in your bed. You get up and head downstairs where your wife and kids are already having breakfast. When they see you, they all start screaming and your wife calls the police. None of your family knows who you are.
7. You call an 800 number for technical support for a new piece of electronic equipment that you bought, and an associate named George helps you out. That night, your sleep is disturbed by the feeling that someone is watching you. Startled, you sit up in bed and see a silhouette in the moonlight. It's George.
8. You're visiting a friend at his new home. You walk up to the door and knock. After a couple of seconds, someone knocks back on the other side of the door, and the evening darkness lifts. You look around and find that you're now *inside* a strange house.
9. You're ready to carve your Jack-o'-Lantern and have your supplies all laid out. When you plunge your knife into the top of your pumpkin to cut out a lid, the

pumpkin begins to bleed.

10. You're writing a story late at night and fall asleep in front of your computer. When you wake up, it's still dark outside, and you find that your story is several pages longer than you remember ... and it's being written even as you watch.
11. Ready for bed, you turn off the television. You freeze in your tracks as the sound of the show you were watching begins playing somewhere upstairs, where your bedroom is.
12. Someone rings your doorbell just before you head to bed one night. You start to answer the door but then remember that you don't have a doorbell.
13. You're cleaning out your grandmother's garage after she dies when you come across an old tape recorder with a cassette inside. You plug in the machine and are surprised that it works, but you're astounded to hear your grandmother talking to your grandfather about the current president. Your grandfather died 30 years ago.
14. You arrive at work one morning to find a deck of playing cards sitting on your desk. You don't think much about it until lunch when you thumb through the cards to find that one in the middle of the deck has a photo on the front. It shows you thumbing through the deck of cards, wearing the clothes you're wearing now.
15. One day, your brother, sister-and-law, and niece visit your home. Your niece coaxes you into a "tea party" with her and her imaginary friend, Tina. An hour after they leave, your doorbell rings, and a young woman—not your niece—on your stoop thanks you for the tea party and tells you that she left her ring in one of the cups. When you look on your coffee table, you find a ring inscribed "Tina" in a cup.
16. You visit a car maker's museum housed in one of their old factories. Your tour guide is a young man of about 30 who seems to have an uncanny knowledge of how the cars were made and how the factory operated, even though the vehicles had been obsolete for decades. At the end of the tour, your guide invites you to explore a few more exhibits in the lobby, and he disappears into the dark back rooms. You are struck by one of the displays—a photo and story of a young worker killed on the assembly line in 1951. When you look closer, you realize it was your tour guide.
17. After a night of heavy rain, you step outside your home to find several sets of boot tracks. You follow them to a tree right outside your bedroom window and find an empty pair of muddy boots, a gun scope, and a picture of you.

18. You're home alone one night and see a man standing outside the window. You reach for the phone to call the police and then notice that your dog is outside, too. He barks, and your spine tingles as you realize that he is in the room behind you. You're seeing reflections.
19. You head to your car after work one dark October night and, as you approach, you notice the vehicle rocking back and forth on its shocks. It also seems to be growling, and a huge, thick feline tail whips out from behind the trunk.
20. You're unpacking in the kitchen of your new house when you hear a door slam closed upstairs. You sprint up the stairs and find that all of the doors—bedrooms, bathrooms, closets—are **open**.
21. You're having breakfast with your wife one morning when your cell phone buzzes on the counter across the room. You go to see who it is and find it's a text from your wife—who is sitting at the table and whose phone is next to yours on the counter.
22. You're hiking in the woods with your girlfriend, and you have a pain in your leg that has been getting worse all day. You are relieved for the break when nature calls and your girl heads off behind a bush. While she's gone, the backpack she left behind slumps over and a rag doll dressed like you falls out. It has a pin stuck in its leg.
23. You work your whole life to become an astronaut, and you're picked to be on the first manned flight to Mars. As you prepare to land on the surface, your two fellow pioneers shed their flight suits to reveal themselves as hideous monsters, and one tells the other how happy he is that they are finally able to go home.
24. You get yourself into a terrible situation and end up killing a man in a fight. No one knows what you've done, and you retreat to your parents' house to try and figure out what to do. In your old room, you absent-mindedly pick up a stack of baseball cards until one stops you in your tracks—the man you just killed is in the stands behind home plate, and he's pointing at you.
25. You've heard the old house is haunted, but you don't really believe it. You go there all the time, and the only people you ever see or hear are the live ones who come looking for a thrill. Strange that they never seem to notice you.
26. Old Mrs. Brown always has the best tomatoes in town, and everyone whispers about her secret formula. All you know is that she hires one high school senior

each year to work her garden, and she pays well. This year it's you. Wonder whatever happened to your friend, Dave, who did the honors last year. Say, isn't that Dave's hat over there on the fence post?

27. At Christmas, your mother brings your daughter an old teddy bear she found at an antique shop. After your mom leaves, your little girl runs to you crying because she dropped her bear and "broke" it. When you look closely at the stuffed animal, you find that an arm is ripped open—and a human bone is sticking out.
28. You're having dinner with your new girlfriend and her parents. Her mother serves a pot roast that tastes strange and is really tough to chew, but you're polite and don't mention it. After the meal, her father goes to the front door, engages the deadbolt, and turns back to the family. "I hope this one has better taste than Billy, honey," he says to his daughter.
29. You go to confessional and tell the priest that you hit a dog on the road. He prescribes a dose of Hail Marys and Our Fathers and sends you on your way. That evening, after a day of church and football games, you walk into your dark house, and the door closes behind you. In the blackness, you see two red eyes, and then a circle of votive candles lights on their own from the floor. In the center is the priest, holding the leash to a demonic-looking Doberman.
30. You normally wouldn't pick up anyone so late in the night, but the old man looked so pitiful that you couldn't pass him by. Now you find yourself in a zombie nightmare: do you eat him and take the chance that his aged meat will make you sick, or drop him off and go hungry for the night?
31. After a night of camping, you develop a terrible sore throat and decide to go to the local clinic. The doctor comes in, checks you out, and says you have an infection. He gives you a shot and tells you to wait a while before leaving to make sure you don't have a reaction. He leaves the room, but a few minutes later, another white-coated man enters and apologizes for your wait. He introduces himself as the doctor.
32. It's late August, and you pull to a stoplight behind a school bus marked with the name of a school district you've never heard of before. As you sit and wait for the light to turn, the back door of the bus opens, and zombie kids hop out and start marching towards your car.
33. You move into a new house, and while you're cleaning out one of the closets you find a box on the top shelf. When you pull it down, a baseball card falls off and lands face-up: it's one of your favorite players of all-time, an old-timer who is still

alive. The following evening, you're watching TV and flip to ESPN, where they say your hero died that day. Can those baseball cards tell the future?

34. They say if you're outside and you feel a cold spot, it's a ghost crossing your path. You think ghosts feel warm spots and say that it's a person who has crossed their path? What do you think the world looks like from a ghost's perspective?
35. It's getting close to Christmas, and you take your family out to one of those you-cut Christmas tree places. With every swing of the axe you hear a scream. No one else in your family seems to notice.
36. Santa Claus may not be real, but with each passing year, you find it harder and harder to explain who is leaving those great gifts for you on Christmas morning ... even though you live alone.
37. Your wife spends most of each night awake, caring for your baby girl, so she says it's no big deal for her to get up early and cook Easter dinner. You're just slightly concerned, though, when you walk into the kitchen on Easter morning and see a baby's sock hanging out of the oven door.
38. You kiss your kids goodbye on a steamy August morning as you head to work, the two of them getting ready for school. When you come home that night, the kids are already home — all three of them. They all greet you as, “Daddy,” and your wife shows no concern that you've gained an extra child.
39. Halfway through your Thanksgiving meal it becomes quite apparent that you and your wife have different definitions of, “having guests for dinner.”
40. On Mother's Day, *your* mother tells you that she's actually your twin sister. What happens next?
41. You're hiking through the woods on a crisp fall day when you hear rustling from off to your right. You peek through the trees into a clearing and see a circle of deer standing on their hind legs. In the middle is a hunter, unconscious, with his gun laying at his side.
42. You're at a New Year's Eve party, and with 10 seconds left in the old year, you grab your honey and start to smooch. When the clock counts down and people scream for the New Year, you break your kiss and find that you don't know the person you've been kissing. You look around at the decorations and realize it's 10 years later than you thought.

43. You're feeling pretty good about how your yearly physical is going until the nurse says she's going to draw your blood. "Time to check the dipstick," she says, then leans forward and pulls a dipstick out of the back of your neck. You can see that it's covered in oil.
44. As you approach your house after work one night, you see an old man standing by your mailbox and notice that he looks a lot like your uncle who passed away two weeks earlier. When you get to your mailbox, the old man vanishes, but inside is a letter addressed to you, postmarked in your uncle's city and dated a month before he died.
45. Your mom always kept a scary picture of a man hanging on the wall in your spare bedroom while you were growing up. You never wanted to be around it, but as you got older, you thought of the picture more and more. One morning, when you're standing at the mirror getting ready for work, you realize that you look just like the man in the picture. You call your mom and ask her where she got it. She says she picked it up at a flea market, and she doesn't know who it is. You ask her to take a closer look and, when she does, she gasps because the inscription on the back lists your name and current age. It also says the photo was taken the day before you died.
46. You've always found babies unsettling but never more so than when you come home from work one night and hear one crying on the other side of your living room wall. You live alone in an old farmhouse at least a mile from any other neighbors.
47. You're driving on a desolate country road far out of range of the nearest cell tower. Everything is fine until your engine sputters to a stop at the side of the road. You get out and open your hood only to find that your car has no engine .
48. You're on vacation with your family and decide to step out of the hotel room to get a bucket of ice. In the hallway, a sign tells you the ice machine is on the next floor up. You take the stairs up, get your ice, and climb back down. When you get to your floor, there is no door. You turn around and head back upstairs, but there's no door there, either. The stairs just go on and on, up and down, with no exit.
49. You live in the country, down a long gravel driveway, and every once in awhile, you need to have new stone brought in. One summer, you hire a new company to freshen up your drive, and they bring a load of gravel and spread it out as expected. It looks nice and white and fresh, but you notice the shape of each rock is different than usual — long and cylindrical. Looking closer, you pick one up, hold it to the light, and realize it's a finger bone. They are ALL bones.

50. You come home late from work one night to find your wife in the embrace of another man, who has his back to you. You scream, and your wife screams, and the man turns towards you ... he *is* you.
51. Over the winter, one of your favorite baseball players dies in a horrific car accident, so when you turn on the television on Opening Day you're shocked to find that he's in the starting lineup for your team.